

THE BARDIAN

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EXTRA

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The Bardian editorial staff is aware of the fact that the issue of Bard's next president being a clergyman is only one factor in the overall existing situation. Therefore, we are anxious for the community to read the following letters received for publication.

The article that follows expresses some of the insights that I, along with a group of fellow students, received upon having a long chat with one of the members of the Faculty Advisory Committee the other day. The facts stated here are accurate insofar as they have their source in statements of this faculty member; the opinions expressed are sober reflections on the implications of those facts, and are shared by those students besides myself who have had the opportunity to talk with this faculty member.

It seems that the question as to whether a member of a clerical institution should be the President of Bard College is being evaluated at present by many students from a rather limited perspective. Perhaps the main issue is not merely the pros and cons of whether a clergyman should assume the role of President of a college such as Bard. Although this question certainly does and must play a part in any evaluation of the problem, I think that the overall issue involves quite a bit more than this. To be specific let us first examine the question as to whether financial support from individual members of an institution such as the Episcopal Church would have any undesirable effects on the internal life of the college. The fear prevalent among many students is that such support might obligate the college to conditions which it would prefer not to accept. Even if it should happen, however, that such fears are justified, which might not be the case, it must be pointed out that this is far from being the entire issue.

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This is not intended as a protest against general student opinion, as expressed in the recent Bardian editorial. It is simply a request that we think constructively of Bard, that we do not assume the implications of this new presidency from the external fact of Dr. Kline's membership in the Episcopal ministry.

The Bardian Extra was by far one of the most slanted to date. I believe the editorial staff was present at the meeting with Dr. Kline, at which time the issues, made in the supplement, were explained. Unless I was terribly mistaken, Dr. Kline emphasized that Bard would be under no pressure from the Episcopal Church. As Dr. Kline explained, Bard has had the Episcopal Church in its background much too long for the Church to completely lose interest. He adamantly stated that Bard would remain a non-denominational school.

Attracting a diversified student body WILL NOT be detrimental, but beneficial to Bard as an academic and social unit. Bard was chartered as a liberal arts college, and part of a liberal arts education IS learning to live in a diversified community.

Since Dr. Kline has been the unanimous choice of the Board of Trustees, and has faculty backing, we, as students, who do not possess complete understanding of Bard's administrative problems, ought not to voice an opinion so decidedly antagonistic. Rome is said to have fallen because of inward disintegration; will Bard do the same without student support?

We can only hope that should Dr. Kline become president, our standing among "other small liberal arts colleges in the country" will rise, not fall.

Marilynn Katzenstein

To be perfectly frank, the college at present finds itself in a position in which it must broaden its sources of financial support merely in order to survive. Most colleges and universities draw a considerable amount of their support from past alumni. However, Bard has never had any support of this kind to speak of. It is necessary to point out, however, that this does not involve any attempt to draw upon one particular source of support to the exclusion of others. The fact is that other areas of financial support had been sought out with a great deal of effort in recent years. But the support has not been forthcoming. In one sense, the attempt to draw upon St. Stephan's alumni as an area of support has now become a necessity for survival. In addition, since it is a fact that we have not succeeded up to now in drawing much support from such a group, it seems reasonable to pose the following question:

If a group such as the St. Stephan's alumni has not been willing to lend its support to the college, then why should any individual or organization which has never had any association whatever with the college be willing to lend its support?

It thus seems most necessary and logical that an attempt should be made to begin to broaden our area of support in the direction of St. Stephan's alumni and other groups. This emphatically does not mean that we are giving away the college to the church, as many of us fear. Such a move would serve only as a first step, a beginning; we would have every intention of continuing to broaden our area of support in every direction possible.

As to the question of whether Dr. Kline should become President of Bard College, we find ourselves in a similar situation. The job of President of Bard is not terribly appealing to too many people at this time. The college is in a rather critical financial situation, as it has been for some time, and this together with many other problems that exist does not make the job of the presidency a very inviting one. If Dr. Kline rejects the job, it seems reasonable to ask whether we would be able to find another man of his integrity, sincerity, and concern who would be willing to take

on the job. And this would put us in a rather desperate situation. In addition, those of us who have met and spoken with Dr. Kline are well acquainted with the fact that he has no intention of making any radically drastic changes in the internal life of the college either socially or academically. I personally trust Dr. Kline's sincerity and integrity enough to believe that this is the case. We need Dr. Kline if only for the reason that here is a man who has expressly stated his desire to help the college get on its feet, and put all his effort into this goal.

It would thus seem that what is needed on the part of the students is not merely short-sighted antagonism towards the idea of having a clergyman as president, but rather a broader outlook, seen in wider perspective.

I feel that many of us have failed to view the situation with the wider perspective that is needed, and that a reevaluation of attitudes should be forthcoming at this time.

It is my personal hope, and the hope of those whom I know share these opinions, that Dr. Kline is seriously considering the job of president, and that if he finds it wise to accept, he can count on the willingness of the student body to cooperate with him.

To conclude, it is to be at least desired that many of us will undertake to evaluate and examine our opinions on this issue, what ever they may be, in the light of the facts and viewpoints which have been presented here.

Charles Woiler

Although I have only seen Dr. Kline for twenty minutes in Dining Commons, I've heard he plans to cut off beards (shades of Peter The Great and Kemal Ataturk), enforce clothing regulations, and in general unload the Church upon our heathen shoulders. Personally, some people on campus revolt me with their mode of dress, but I would rather have people be slobs of their own free will than be dictated to....As far as Dr. Kline instituting other regulations of a freedom-depriving nature, I am completely opposed to that but, alas, we do not know for certain that these calamities will befall us...If they are made, Bard will no longer be Bard. In fact it is on the way to becoming just that, while a reverse trend is in order.

Dick Meyer